

Kat's Great Adventures

Ecuador – Best Hikes in Ecuador Trekking Tour 2022

Guided Tour

14 Days / 13 Nights



The Best Hikes in Ecuador is a selection of great trails in the country, targeting a moderate difficulty level, with the comfort of good and charming accommodation along the way. The program aims to cover a wide area, providing a very good insight into Ecuador's landscapes and culture. The itinerary visits some of the most iconic places such as: Pululahua crater, the crater lakes of Cuicocha and Quilotoa, the National Parks of Cotopaxi and Chimborazo and the lovely towns of Otavalo & Baños.

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TICO # 50022092

Itinerary Day to Day

Day 1: Arrival in Quito

Reception at the airport. You will be met by a staff member with a sign with your name. Transfer to hotel in the northern part of the town, Mariscal. This is a convenient location in the touristic area of Quito, close to restaurants, bars and entertainment.



Day 2: City Tour in Quito

Half day private city tour in the historical part of Quito, including La Basilica Church, La Compañia Church and El Panecillo Hill. We leave the hotel, by private transportation, and will see the transformation from the new part of the city to the absolutely beautiful historical and colonial part of Quito. We will have time to see all the interesting churches, plazas etc. But also simply enjoy the local atmosphere, the many shops and sellers. After these interesting sights, we continue to "El Panecillo", the hill in the centre of Quito with a view of the city and the historical centre. Also from here, on clear days, we may observe several of the snow-capped volcanoes surrounding Quito.

Day 3: Trekking: Pululahua's Crater trek (3840 m) 4 hours + 340 m - 340 m

We leave Quito early in the morning and drive one and a half hours to Pululahua's crater rim. From the parking lot, we start our trek into the beautiful crater, descending 340 m by a well-marked trail into the lower "valley". We will do a short hike in the crater and see the people living their way of life, as this is one of the few inhabited active volcanoes in the world. After that, we will head up again to take our transport to Otavalo town. On the way we will make a stop at Inti-ñan museum just located on the Equator line. Inti-ñan is an experimental concept place, where we will see the exact location of the equatorial line and do some "experiments" related to the place. After this visit we will continue our road trip to Otavalo by the valley road. This trip will take about three hours.

Day 4: Trekking: Cuicocha's Crater Lake trek (3400 m) 4 hours + 300 m - 300 m

Pick up at hotel in Otavalo and transfer to Cuicocha's volcanic lake (one hour). From the entrance, we will take the trail that goes around the crater's rim. We will hike almost all the way around the lake, but not entirely, as quite a long stretch is by dirt road. After being picked up by our transport, we will make a short stop at the reception on the lakeshores for a snack and then head to the town of Atuntaqui, which specializes in the manufacturing of leather products. There will be enough time to do some shopping and relax in one of the many cafes.



Day 5: Otavalo's Market and Cochasqui's Ruins (3350 m)

Free morning at Otavalo's famous indigenous market. After lunch transfer (one and a half hours) to the archaeological ruins of Cochasqui, where we will have the opportunity to visit some of the best preserved pyramids and listen to the local history. From Cochasqui we have about two hours to our hotel located at 3350 m, a small settlement located on boundaries of Pasochoa Natural Reserve and Cotopaxi National Park.



Day 6: Trekking: Cotopaxi National Park's trek (3800 m) 6 hours + 450 m

Early morning breakfast and short transfer to the Pita River, from where we will start our trek ascending by the riverside onto the Cotopaxi plateau and continuing over the barren volcanic terrain until the Inka's archaeological ruins known as El Salitre at about 3900 m. After a well-deserved lunch, we will follow a well-marked trail/road until our mountain refuge 3800 m inside the National Park.

Day 7: Trekking: Cotopaxi's Glacier – Limpiopungo's lake (5000 m) 6 hours + 500 m - 1200 m

Transfer (one hour and forty five minutes) to the parking area (4500 m). Then hike to the high refuge José Rivas Hut (4800 m) and on to the glacier (5000 m). After a break to enjoy the amazing views, we will descend past the parking place and into the Lava Valley that follows a gorge into the plateau. Then a flat walk until Limpiopungo Lake, where we will hike around it before being picked up and driven back to the mountain hut.

Day 8: Transfer to Quilotoa's Crater Lake (3900 m) 1.5 – 2 hours + 250 m + 250 m

After a relaxing morning at the hut, we will begin our transfer to the other side of the famous "Volcano Avenue". First we will descend into the valley of Machachi and then we will take one of the newly renovated roads heading to Quilotoa's Crater Lake (four hour drive + stops). After arriving to our lodge, we will go to the viewpoint on the crater's rim and enjoy the sunset with a view over some of the iconic volcanoes of the eastern range. There is the option, for those who feel like it, to descend to the shores of the lake inside the crater and hike back up again (the hike will take about one and a half hours down and up).



Day 9: Trekking: Chugchilan town (3198 m) 5 hours + 203 m - 1025 m

At about 8 a.m. we will start our trek by the western trail, hiking around about a third of the crater on a spectacular trail by the upper edge of the rim. With clear skies the view is incredible towards the distant Cotopaxi and Illinizas volcanoes, the lake at the bottom of the crater, the western valley and Guayama and its town. From the rim, we will descend into the Guayama Valley and follow a series of trails and dirt roads until we reach the Rio Toachi gorge. This last section is quite steep following an old trail to the river crossing, where a short hike will lead us to the town of Chugchilan and our local lodge.



Day 10: Trekking: Insilivi town (3000 m) 5 hours + 150 m - 200 m

From Chugchilan the landscape becomes greener and colorful. There is plenty of small local production of the most basic harvest items such as potatoes, corn, beans, etc. The lifestyle is still very traditional and it is mainly inhabited by peasants and descendants from Indigenous groups. We will walk by a changing landscape with valleys and gorges decorated with the Toachi River, until our next stop at Insilivi town, where we will stay at another lovely lodge and enjoy a pleasant afternoon.

Day 11: Chimborazo National Park – Whimper hut (5000 m) 2 hours + 200 m -200 m

Today we have quite a long transport time from Insilivi to Chimborazo's National Park (five hours). First we have to retrace our steps to the Pan-American Highway, which will take us about two hours, then we will head south taking a minor road towards the park. Our transport will take us straight to the door of the lower hut, from where we will hike up to the reknown Whimper's hut at 5000 m. During the one hour hike, if the weather is clear, we will have a perfect view of Chimborazo's northwest face and the ever dry rocky terrain of this peak. From the hut we would enjoy a great mountain atmosphere in under Ecuador's major summit. We will return to the lower hut and start our descent to a very comfortable mountain lodge at the foot of the mountain in an altitude of 4280 m.



Day 12: Trekking: Llama Trek (4280 m) 6 hours + 120 m - 900 m

An early start from Michaguasca, taking the main trail of the Llama Trek (4280 m). This trek roams over the Chimborazo's high "paramos" gaining altitude as we approach the valley that separates the Chimborazo from its neighbor, the Carihuairazo volcano. From the upper pass at 4400 m, the trail leads us down into the opposite side of Chimborazo, into a very isolated indigenous region called Urbina in Abras-Pungo, which lies on the southeast face of Chimborazo. This hike goes through a very different landscape than the ones we walked in before. It is known as the Llama trek due to the large amount of these animals roaming around the local's farms. After the six hour hike, we will meet our transport that will take us to much warmer weather: the city of Baños (three and a half hours).



Day 13: Town of Baños de Santa Agua (1820 m)

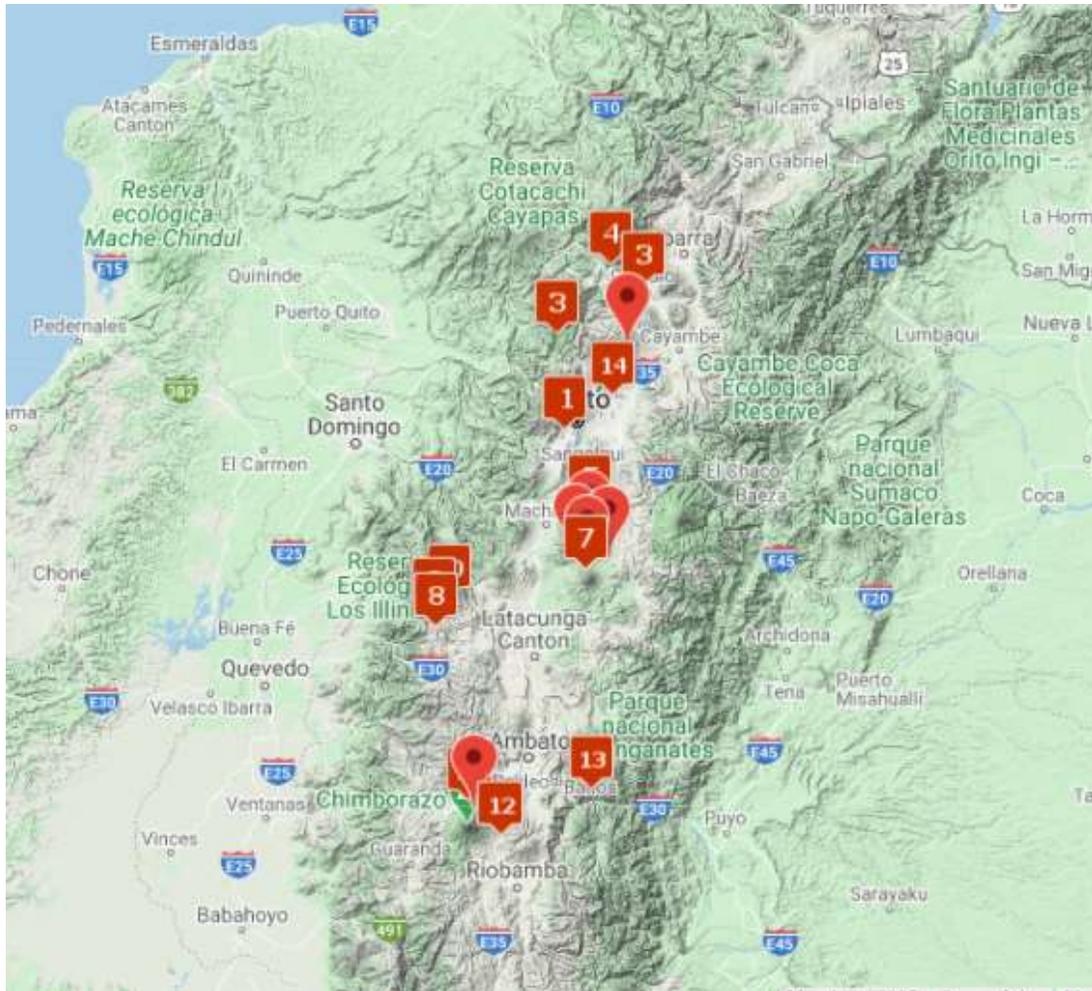
Baños is located under the impressive Tungurahua volcano (5023 m) that is probably the most active volcano in Ecuador. Baños is situated near this volcano in the zone between the highlands and the lowlands, giving it a wonderful climate and many beautiful natural sites and activities. We have a whole morning to visit some of the beautiful sights in the area, especially El Pailon del Diablo waterfall and the cable car that crosses the huge valley. After lunch, we will begin our trip back to Quito's area (three to four hours) for our last night in this gorgeous country.

Day 14: Departure

Time to leave the volcanoes of Ecuador! Pick up at the hotel and transfer out to Quito's Airport (one to two hours). End of services.



Route



Technical Characteristics:

Route Profile: Medium. Daily walks up to 6 hours per day, at high altitude. Previous hiking experience and physical conditioning would be of benefit.

Travel Season: Any date on request from January 2 to December 31, 2022



Prices per Person

Double Occupancy	\$ 2995.00 USD
Single Supplement	\$ 444.00 USD
Tour Leader (for groups up to 4 people)	\$ 1370.00 USD

*Group rates available for this tour. As this is a guided tour, the pricing improves with more people participating. Please ask us for details

Accommodation:

3* hotels and haciendas, mountain huts and refuges

Included:

- Local English speaking mountain guide during the entire program
- Assistant mountain guides during trek in a ratio of 1:5
- City guide for Quito's city tour
- Private transportation throughout the entire program
- 3 nights in shared double room in hotel in the city of Quito
- 2 nights in shared double room in hotel in the town of Otavalo
- 1 night in shared double room in hotel in the town of Loreto
- 2 nights in shared dormitory at Cotopaxi National Park lower hut
- 1 night in shared double room in basic lodge in the town of Quilotoa
- 1 night in shared double room in lodge in the town of Chugchilan
- 1 night in shared double room in lodge in the town of Insilivi
- 1 night in shared double room in basic lodge in the settlement of Michaguasca
- 1 night in shared double room in hotel in the city of Baños
- Meals as specified in the day to day itinerary (13 breakfasts, 9 lunches and 5 dinners)
- Entry fee to the National parks and natural reserves
- Entry fees to museums and sights mentioned in the program

Not Included:

- Domestic and international flights
- Meals not mentioned in the program
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Personal expenses
- Tips
- Everything not mentioned in the "Included" list